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Psychological Contract Breach, Behavioural Work Outcomes, Organisational Identification, and Islamic Work Ethics: A Moderated Mediation Study

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Abstract:

We investigated how organisational identification (OID) mediates the influences of psychological contract breach (PCB) on two work outcomes [organisational citizenship behaviour (OCB) and counterproductive work behaviour (CWB)], and how Islamic work ethics (IWE) moderated the PCB–OID relationship. We collected data from 256 Palestinian managers in Gaza Strip ministries using a self-report questionnaire; we employed Structural Equation Modelling in analysing the data using Smart PLS. Our findings reveal that OID mediates between PCB and the two work outcomes. Further, we show that IWE has no moderating influence on the PCB–OID relationship. Finally, the influence of PCB on the two work outcomes is insignificant.

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1. Introduction

We explored what happens to employees' sense of organisational citizenship behaviour (OCB) and its antithesis (counterproductive work behaviour, CWB) when they experience a breach of psychological contract (PCB) in their workplaces. Employees' behaviours that contribute to organisational effectiveness are known as job performance. Job performance is considered a multidimensional construct composed of various forms of behaviours, including OCB and CWBs (Judge & Kammeyer-Mueller, 2012). Positive organisational behaviour is dependent on positive psychology and vice versa (Dannhauser, 2007). The psychological contract is an essential framework to understand the diverse forms of employment relationships (Zhao et al., 2007). In connection with the current study, the researchers intend to include two domains of behavioural work outcomes, OCB as positive outcomes and CWB as a negative one.

Although the importance of behavioural work outcomes such as OCB and CWB, they have been rarely investigated in the Palestinian public sector. However, the Palestinian context is considered a unique context due to the volatility in the operating environment. Recently, the public sector in Palestine has been experiencing greater challenges and pressures in delivering services. Particularly, in the Gaza Strip which is the southern part of Palestine, this is due to a political situation that has put Gaza under blockade for more than a decade. Consequently, this situation has affected the ability of the Gaza government to meet the obligations toward public sector employees. Employees working in the Gaza government have not received salaries for years, which means the compensation system for the Gaza government is not stable. Rousseau (1990), stressed the importance of the compensation system in shaping psychological contract and its effects on employees' perceptions of mutual obligations. Similarly, Turnley and Feldman (1999) concentrated on those most frequently used elements: the amount of pay and merit pay as the main factors that may affect PCB. However, although public sector managers in the Palestinian ministries have not received salaries for a long time, they have been still delivering services to the public, which provides an avenue to examine the relationship between

PCB and behavioural work outcomes among managers working in the Palestinian ministries.

However, it is worth to be mentioned that the Gaza government is an Islamic one and has controlled Gaza since 2007. It is considered as the first Islamic government that adopts the Islamic ideology and tries to implement Islamic rules in all aspects of human life. As pointed out by Sayigh (2010) the Gaza government upholds Islamist social ideology as its core principles. Religious beliefs could make a significant difference in employee behaviour and performance. The study of Osman et al. (2013) revealed that religiosity has a positive significant relationship with employee performance. The religion of Islam provides a comprehensive system of life rooted in ethics. Islamic work ethics (IWE) guides Muslims' attitude and behaviour in the workplace and contributes to the welfare of societies (Rokhman & Hassan, 2012). An employee with high work ethics tends to view hard work as normal work ethics (Mudrack & Mason, 2010). Therefore, based on the above argument it is important to observe the potential moderating role of IWE on employee attitudes when PCB takes place.

Besides that, organisational identification (OID) is considered one of the most important factors to reflect the psychological state of the employee with the organisation and maybe a crucial variable for explaining behavioural outcomes (Edwards, 2005). Oakes (1987) pointed out that the more psychologically significant the group membership will be, the more notable the identity, and the more psychologically affect the behaviour. OID considers as a psychological state that reflects the strength of the connection between employees and the organisation. Previous studies have reported that, behaviours such as: increase in-role and extra-role behaviour and decrease turnover are positively related to high OID and influence the organisational performance (Peters et al., 2010; Riketta, 2005; Van Dick et al., 2006). Chen et al. (2013) found a positive relationship between OID and OCB.

Moreover, Demir (2015) pointed out that, until recently, OID has received little attention as a research topic within organisations. AlAtwi and Bakir (2014) revealed that the mediation role of OID is still unclear and needs more investigation. The authors also implied that the relationship between OID and negative behaviour such as CWB is still unexplored. A study conducted by Epitropaki (2013) reported that the association between breaching psychological contract and job performance through OID has rarely been examined. The above discussion demonstrated the existing theoretical gap that calls for intensive study to examine the mediating role

of OID between PCB and behavioural work outcomes.

However, the traditional perspective on the influence of PCB on employees' attitudinal and behavioural outcomes are based on social exchange theory (Aselage and Eisenberger, 2003). Social exchange theory postulate that employment is an exchange of material and socio-emotional benefits and both employees and employer enter into contractual relationships to maximize benefits (Blau, 1964). Social exchange theory has been widely employed to explain employees' potential reactions as a response to breaching or fulfilling the psychological contract (Lester et al., 2002; Turnley et al., 2003). Therefore, in this study, social exchange theory was advanced to explain the effects of PCB on work attitudinal and behavioural outcomes. Furthermore, the researchers draw a perspective from social exchange theory to examine OCB directed toward organisation. This theory posits that employees reciprocate their efforts with the source they receive benefits. Thus, it is expected that managers may mutually exchange their attitudes and behaviour with the organisation as a reciprocate with their salaries. Hence, based on the above argument the study conceptual framework was developed.
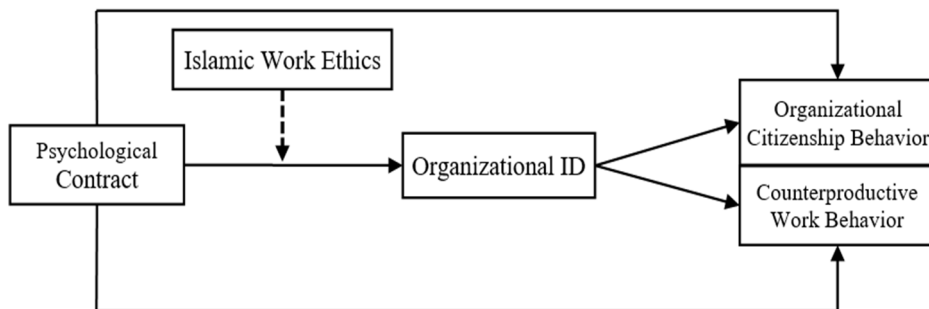

Figure.1: Research Model

2. Literature Review and Hypothesis Formulation

2.1. PCB and the Two Behavioural Work Outcomes

The crucial employee behaviour that derives from the effect of psychological contract is OCB (Coyle-Shapiro & Kessler, 2002; Robinson & Morrison, 1995; Robinson & Rousseau, 1994; Rousseau, 1989). A recent study conducted by Yang et al. (2020) revealed that Psychological contract under fulfilment is negatively related to OCB. Wright and Cropanzano (2004) found that psychological well-being significantly predicted employee performance. OCB has been considered as an important factor enhancing organisational performance (Podsakoff et al., 2009), and employee performance (Chiang &Hsieh, 2012). Previous research has reported that PCB negatively affects work outcomes task performance and OCB (Lee et al., 2014; Shih & Chuang, 2012; Suazo, 2009).

However, understanding individual psychological processes has long been argued as the best way to explain unethical behaviour in organisations (Barsky, 2011). CWB or workplace deviance refers to a deviant behaviour that is directly harmful to the organisation (Bennett & Robinson, 2000). Tomprou and Nikolaou (2011) reported that, when an employee apprehends their employer's failure to perform his expected obligations, the PCB is likely to occur, and this will lead to workplace deviance.

Previous studies have widely reported consistent results that, PCB is negatively associated with positive behaviour such as OCB, while the relationship between PCB and negative work behaviour such as CWB is still unclear. Although the few empirical studies that investigate the relationship between PCB and CWB, the majority have a positive association between PCB and CWB. The study of Manzoor et al. (2015) reported that PCB positively related to CWB.

Additionally, the majority of previous studies conducted in developed countries and none has empirically investigated this relationship in the Palestinian public sector. Therefore, this study advanced a conceptual framework to investigate the relationship between PCB and behavioural work outcomes (i.e. OCB and CWB) in the Palestinian context. Consistent with the previous findings, it is predicted that PCB is negatively related to OCB while will positively associate with CWB among Palestinian managers in Gaza Strip ministries. Hence, the following hypotheses can be posited as follow:

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H$_{1a}$: PCB will negatively affect OCB among Palestinian managers in Gaza
   Strip ministries.

H$_{1b}$: PCB will positively affect CWB among Palestinian managers in Gaza
   Strip ministries.

2.2. PCB and OID

PCB is more strongly related to attitudes than behaviour (Conway &
Briner, 2009). OID implies a psychological connection and a sense of
oneness with the organisation (Mann, 2010). Compared with many
organisational behaviour concepts, little attention has been paid to the OID
construct (Demir, 2015). Reviewed literature, show that very few studies
examined the association between PCB and OID and none of these studies
were conducted in the public sector (Epitropaki, 2013; Li et al., 2016;
Restubog et al., 2008). More importantly, none of the previous studies has
been conducted in one of the developing countries, such as Palestine.
Therefore, the current study will empirically investigate the influence of
PCB on OID among managers in the public sector in Palestine. It can be
argued that when PCB take place it is expected to negatively affect OID.
Therefore, the following hypothesis can be formulated:

H2: PCB will negatively affect OID among Palestinian managers in Gaza
Strip ministries.

2.3. OID and the Two Behavioural Work Outcomes

According to Oakes (1987), the more psychologically significant the
group membership will be, the more notable the identity, and the more
psychologically affect the behaviour. Zhang et al. (2011) stated that
employees who are strongly identified with their organisations are more
willing to present extra-role performance. The study conducted by Li et al.
(2016) revealed that OID can be significant predictors of job performance.
From the literature review, the researchers found very few studies have been
examined the effects of OID on OCB (Demir, 2015; Jiang, 2010; Wu & Wu,
2010), moreover, all of these studies reported the positive significant effects
of OID on OCB and conducted in developed countries contexts.

Concerning CWB the study of AlAtwi and Bakir (2014) found that
OID negatively affects CWB, the researchers also reported inconclusive

outcome on the relationship between OID and negative behaviour such as CWB. Furthermore, the majority of previous studies were conducted in developed countries and little attention has been paid to developing Islamic countries. Therefore, the current study will empirically investigate the effect of OID on behavioural work outcomes (OCB and CWB) among public sector managers in Palestine. Based on the above arguments it is expected that OID will positively correlate with OCB while will negatively associate with CWB. Hence, the following hypotheses were advanced:

H$_{3a}$: OID will positively affect OCB among Palestinian managers in Gaza Strip ministries.

H$_{3b}$: OID will negatively affect work CWB among Palestinian managers in Gaza Strip ministries.

Literature review shows that OID may potentially mediate the relationship between PCB and behavioural work outcomes. Additionally, previous studies show that the mediating role of OID between the association of PCB with behavioural work outcomes is still unclear and need more investigation (AlAtwi & Bakir, 2014; Epitropaki, 2013). Therefore, the researchers intend to examine the mediating effect of OID on the relationship between PCB and behavioural work outcomes (i.e. OCB and CWB). Consequently, the following hypotheses can be posited

H$_{4a}$: OID will be a significant mediator between PCB and OCB among Palestinian managers in Gaza Strip ministries.

H$_{4b}$: OID will be a significant mediator between PCB and CWB among Palestinian managers in Gaza Strip ministries.

2.4. IWE as a Moderator between PCB and OID

The concept of work ethic refers to the values, beliefs, intentions and objectives that people apply to their work (Clarke, 1983). The Islamic work ethic guides Muslim's attitude and behaviour in the workplace and contributes to the welfare of societies (Rokhman & Hassan, 2012). Individuals with high work ethics tend to view hard work and sacrifice as normal work ethics (Mudrack & Mason, 2010). However, by reviewing the literature, it is found that there are several variables have potential moderating the effects on the PCB and work outcomes relationship. For instance, Agarwal and Bhargava (2013) found that educational level

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moderates the association of PCB and affective commitment. Shih and Chuang (2013) found that self-esteem moderates the relationship between PCB and OCB. Furthermore, Bavik and Bavik (2014) revealed that moral identity has moderating effects on the link between PCB and incivility behaviour. Bordia et al. (2008) reported that self-control moderates the relationship between PCB and CWB. While Ahmed et al. (2019) found a positive relationship between IWE and OCB. However, from the previous discussion, it can be seen that many variables could moderate the effects of PCB on work attitudinal and behavioural outcomes. Whereas, none of these variables reflects the Islamic perspective. Which indicate that the potential moderating role of IWE is still unexplored. Thus, it is empirically significant to observe the potential moderating effects of IWE on the relationship between PCB and OID.

Additionally, most of the previous research has been conducted in Western economies, these countries follow different cultures and hold different religions. The culture of these countries is individualistic and non-Islamic. This study is one of few studies conducted in developing, Arab and Muslim countries specifically Palestine. Unlike Western and European countries, Palestine considers a unique context that holds a collectivist culture and follows Islam as the main religion. Therefore, the uniqueness of the Palestinian context provides a potential research opportunity to fill the observed theoretical and contextual gap. Hence, the following hypothesis was formulated:

H5: IWE moderate the relationship between PCB and OID. Whereas high IWE will weaken the effects of PCB on OID.

3. Methodology

This study employed the quantitative approach to examine the relationships between variables. The study target population is 900 managers distributed among 15 ministries located in different areas in Gaza Strip. A sample of 270 was randomly selected from the target population (Krejcie & Morgan, 1970; Saunders et al., 2012). A total of 300 self-administered questionnaires were distributed, 280 questionnaires were returned representing a 93% rate of return. By checking the missing data, a sum of 7 questionnaires was removed because of uncompleted answers. After checking the missing data, a total of 273 completed questionnaires were entered into SPSS version 24 to screen data statistically. A total of 17

cases were identified as multivariate outliers and were deleted because they could result in non-normality of the data which could in turn influence statistical results (Hair et al., 2010). However, after removing the outliers, the remaining 256 usable cases were retained to proceed to the next stage of data analysis.

3.1 Measurement

To measure PCB, this study adopted the most commonly used scale developed by Robinson and Morrison (2000). This scale has five items with reliability Cronbach's alpha is 0.92. The reliability in this study is high as it is found Cronbach's Alpha 0.788, composite reliability 0.855 and AVE 0.543. To measure IWE, the researchers adopted the 17 items scale developed by (Ali, 2005). The reliability of this scale Cronbach alpha was 0.89. in the current study, it is found that this scale has high reliability and validity with 0.861, 0.886 and 0.531 for Cronbach's Alpha, Composite Reliability and AVE respectively. To measure OID, the widely used scale of Mael and Ashforth (1992) was adopted. The scale includes 6 items and the reported coefficient alpha was 0.87. In this study, it is found that the scale has the acceptable and required level of validity and reliability with values 0.86, 0.896 and 0.59 for Cronbach's Alpha, Composite Reliability and AVE respectively. To measure OCB, the seven items scale developed by Williams and Anderson (1991) was employed. The coefficient alpha is 0.72. with regard to the current study, the scale has an acceptable level of validity and reliability with values of 0.623, 0.798 and 0.569 for Cronbach's Alpha, Composite Reliability and AVE respectively. To measure CWB a scale developed by Bennett and Robinson (2000) was adopted. The scale consists of 12 items to assess organisational deviance toward the organisation. In this study the scale has high-reliability Cronbach's Alpha is 0.8, Composite reliability is 0.858. in addition, the construct validity found AVE is 0.503.

4. Data Analysis

The Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) 24 for the window was utilized to log in and clean the data. Then, SEM-PLS software (SmartPLS) was employed to test the relationships among variables.

5. Findings

H1 proposed that PCB will significantly affect work outcomes (OCB and CWB). It is found that (β= -0.112, t= 1.764, p= 0.078) for the effects of PCB on OCB and (β= 0.042, t= 0.471, p=0.638) for the effects on CWB. These results reveal the insignificant effects of PCB on both behavioural outcomes included in this study. Thus, it can be said H1a and H1b are not supported. H2 stated that PCB will negatively affect OID. It is found (β= -0.318, t= 4.98, p= 0.000 which is less than 0.05), which provide support to this hypothesis. H3 stated that OID will significantly affect work outcomes (OCB and CWB). The findings reveal that (β= 0.246, t= 2.62, p= 0.009 which is less than p<0.05) for the effects on OCB and (β= -0.284, t= 2.869, p= 0.004 which is less than p<0.05) for the relationship with CWB which provide support to H3. Table 1 summarizes the results of this study.

Table 1. The Result of Hypothesis Testing

H. No.	Path	(β)	T Statistics	P Values	Result
H1a	PCB -> OCB	-0.112	1.764	0.078	Not supported
H1b	PCB -> CWB	0.042	0.471	0.638	Not supported
H2	PCB -> OID	-0.318	4.98	0.000	Supported
H3a	OID -> OCB	0.246	2.62	0.009	Supported
H3b	OID -> CWB	-0.284	2.869	0.004	Supported

On the other hand, the mediating role of OID between the PCB and work outcomes (OCB and CWB) was stated in H4. Table 2 shows the findings of the mediation hypothesis. The results show the significant relationship for this hypothesis as (β= -0.078, t= 2.076, p= 0.038 which is less than p<0.05) for OCB and (β= 0.09, t= 2.185, p= 0.029 which is less than p<0.05) for CWB, which provide support for this hypothesis, suggesting that OID function as a mediator between the association of PCB and work outcomes (OCB and CWB).

Table 2. The findings of the mediation hypothesis

H. No.	Path	(β)	T Statistics	P Values	Result
H4a	PCB -> OID -> OCB	-0.078	2.075	0.038	Supported
H4b	PCB -> OID -> CWB	0.09	2.185	0.029	Supported

As can be seen from the above table, it can be said that OID significantly mediates the relationship between PCB and both OCB and CWB.

Finally, hypothesis H5 tests the moderating influence of IWE on the PCB–OID relationship. The findings reveal that (β= 0.159 t= 1.349; p= 0.178 which are greater than p> 0.05). However, the P-value is still above the significance level which indicates that H5 is not supported. It can be said IWE do not moderate the effects of PCB on OID. Table 3 shows the result of the moderation hypothesis.

Table 3. The Result of Moderation Hypothesis

Path	(β)	T Statistics	P Values	Result
H5: IWEs*PCB-> OID	0.159	1.349	0.178	Not supported

6. Discussion

The first hypothesis stated that there is a significant relationship between PCB and behavioural work outcomes (OCB and CWB). Previous research has reported that PCB negatively affects work outcomes such as OCB (Lee et al., 2014; Shih & Chuang, 2012; Suazo, 2009), and is positively related to CWB (Manzoor et al., 2015). Surprisingly, the findings of the current study did not support the findings of previous studies. It is found there is no significant relationship between PCB and both constructs of work behaviour (OCB, and CWB).

However, the findings from the present study are consistent with (Schaupp, 2012) who found no significant relationships between PCB and work outcomes (OCB and CWB). Similar findings are provided by Guo (2016) who found no significant relationship between the five dimensions of PCB and extra-role performance. In relation to these findings, Conway and Briner (2009) pointed out that, PCB is more strongly correlated with work

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attitudes than actual behaviour. Furthermore, Morrison and Robinson (1997) established that breach refers to the cognitive evaluation while violation represents a mental state of readiness for action, which can lead to negative behavioural responses.

The results may be attributed to the recognition of Palestinian managers in Gaza Strip ministries that the reason behind breaching the psychological contract is out of government control. Therefore, managers serving in the Gaza government may have believed the government does not play a big role in breaching the psychological contract, they believed the psychological contract has been breached due to external forces. However, managers may be resistant to the external political forces and support the government. Moreover, another alternative explanation to these is that the entire study population is Muslim and holds Islamic values. As mentioned earlier in this study, ethical Islamic values can be a source of action guides and a source of personality building as well.

The Prophet (SAW) describes the core characteristics of the Muslim character. He (SAW) said: "A Muslim is the one who avoids harming Muslims with his tongue and hands." (Sahih al-Bukhari hadith no. 10). Therefore, the Islamic values promote to produce positive behaviour and they further prevent Muslims to provide negative behaviour such as CWB. The second hypothesis proposed that PCB will negatively affect OID. Like the western context, the findings of this study confirmed that PCB is negatively associated with OID. This result is in line with the previous studies Specifically, (Epitropaki, 2013; Kreiner & Ashforth, 2004; Li et al., 2016; Restubog et al., 2008). The similarity of findings in both Palestine and western contexts provide the possibility to generalize the negative relationship between PCB and OID. However, all the previous studies were conducted in UAS, Philippines, Greek, and China, none of them was conducted in eastern societies, this provides additional empirical evidence from a non-western, different and phenomenal context which is Palestine. This finding is also consistent with social exchange theory which has been widely employed to explain employees' potential reactions as a response to breaching the psychological contract. This result indicates that when managers perceive the PCB takes place, they will react by decreasing OID toward their ministries.

The third hypothesis stated that OID will significantly be associated with behavioural work outcomes (OCB and CWB). It is found that OID is significantly and positively related to OCB. Contrarily, it is negatively

correlated to CWB. These results are in line with the findings of AlAtwi and Bakir (2014); (Demir, 2015; Jiang, 2010; Wu & Wu, 2010) who show that OID has a significant positive relationship with OCB while negatively correlated with CWB. These results are consistent with social exchange theory. In accordance with the view of (Dasgupta et al., 2012; Harrison et al., 2006) who argued that positive work attitudes lead to well-adjusted behaviours vice versa. The results might be attributed to the fact that study respondents are completely aware of the difficulties and obstacles that have faced the Palestinian ministries for a decade. Thus, they protect and support their ministries in this difficult situation by reducing the negative behaviour and saving properties of their ministries, regardless of their respective ministries.

The fourth hypothesis proposed that OID significantly mediates the association between PCB and behavioural work outcomes (OCB and CWB). The results show that OID significantly mediates the relationship between PCB and behavioural work outcomes. These findings confirm that when a psychological contract takes place, employees who are strongly identified themselves with their organisations, are more willing to present positive behaviour such as OCB and less willing to do unwholesome actions such as CWB.

The last hypothesis examined the moderating role of IWE on the relationship between PCB and OID. The findings showed IWE insignificantly moderate the effects of PCB on OID. In other words, the interaction between IWE and PCB has no effects on OID. A possible explanation for this insignificant moderating effect is that there is a strong negative impact of breaching the psychological contract on managers' OID. According to Baron and Kenny (1986), the moderating variable is introduced when there is a weak or inconsistent relation between the predictor and the criterion variable. Therefore, it can be said the identification for managers at the Palestinian ministries will be negatively affected when PCB occurs regardless the level of IWE is high or low.

7. Conclusion

The results of this study could in part contribute to the literature by providing new insights into the effects of PCB on behavioural work outcomes. Additionally, this study extended the knowledge in PCB and organisational behaviour literature by introducing job OID as a mediator. More importantly, the study contributes to the literature by including IWE

as a moderator variable. Therefore, this study provides the needed empirical evidence on moderating role of IWE. By achieving research objectives and answering research questions, the results provide more understanding of the interrelationships that have been investigated in the current research model. The findings revealed that the influence of PCB on behavioural work outcomes (OCB and CWB) was insignificant, while negatively affecting OID. The results confirm the mediating role of OID between PCB and behavioural work outcomes (OCB and CWB). Moreover, the findings show that IWE does not moderate the relationship between PCB and OID.

Future research can include in-role performance as one of the behavioural work outcomes. Additionally, the current research model focuses on OCB from a general view, it may be valuable if future studies focus on a more specific perspective such as including OCB from an Islamic perspective. Moreover, this research model concentrates more on the outcomes of perceived PCB, this provides an opportunity to investigate the antecedents and the factors that lead to PCB. Future research could also employ the qualitative research methodology to gain an in-depth understanding of employee organisation relationship. Finally, examining the research model in other contexts outside Palestine would be a promising area for further research.

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